

P 171434Z MAR 09
FM AMEMBASSY LUANDA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5374
INFO AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
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USMISSION GENEVA
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UNCLAS LUANDA 000166

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NCS FOR PRATT
PRETORIA FOR DISKIN, HALE, RODGERS, WESSEL AND USDA/REYNOLDS
NAIROBI FOR ROBERT DRAPCHO
ROME FOR FODAG NEWBERG

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: DECLARATION OF DISASTER - FLOODS IN ANGOLA

REFTEL: LUANDA 154

11. THIS IS AN ACTION REQUEST. PLEASE SEE PARA 4.

12. As a result of the severe flooding that occurred in mid-February in southern Angola REFTEL (LUANDA 154), the Chief of Mission has determined that the disaster is beyond the capability of the host government to respond, is of sufficient magnitude to warrant US Government assistance, and is in the best interest of the US Government to respond. The Chief of Mission is, therefore, exercising the Disaster Assistance Authority.

13. Heavy rains falling since early February triggered severe flooding in southern and eastern Angola in the beginning of March. Angola's National Civil Protection Unit reports that at least 51,000 people have been affected in the province of Cunene in the localities of Kahama, Cuvelai, Kuanhama, Namakunde, Ombadja and Xangongo. UNICEF officials in Cunene report four deaths, 9,682 houses destroyed, 13,292 families affected, and 138,148 hectares of productive land flooded, with extensive livestock and crop losses. The Provincial Director of Education reports that most classes are suspended, since schools are being used for emergency shelters or are isolated. The Angolan representative of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies said some 150,000-160,000 people have been affected in an area still recovering from severe floods in 2008. The Government of Angola is trying to repair the main road to Namibia, a road that was destroyed by the floods. Furthermore, the roads in Cunene Province between Ondjiva-Cuvelai-Kahama and Mupa have been destroyed, as well as the road between Cuvelai and Xangongo and Cuvelai and Kupateti. Angola's office of Civil Protection is evacuating people and transporting material by boat and helicopter in these areas. The two camps established in Cunene for internally displaced persons during the 2008 floods are fully occupied; this year's flood also caused many camp wells and latrines to collapse, further aggravating camp conditions.

14. Post requests that OFDA release \$50,000 USDOLs for immediate relief efforts. The Ambassador's authority of \$50,000 USDOLs will be programmed through Catholic Relief Services (CRS), which is already implementing development activities with USG funds in southern Angola and is funding a development project in Cunene through its local partner Caritas Angola, a Roman Catholic relief, development and social service organization. The \$50,000 will be used to purchase blankets, kitchen kits, hygiene kits, and shelter

materials.

¶5. Additional funds may be required for further disaster response and post-flood recovery interventions to reduce the economic impact (e.g., agriculture recovery, shelter assistance, and other critical activities).

¶6. Official acceptance of assistance has been conveyed by the Head of the Civil Protection Unit and the Provincial Governor of Cunene, who welcome assistance from outside agencies for short-term emergency needs, including shelter materials, kitchen kits, hygiene kits, water purification and sanitation equipment and material, blankets, clothes and food.

¶7. Host-country agencies involved in relief operations are the Ministry of Assistance and Social Reintegration (MINARS), the National Civil Protection Unit, and provincial and municipal authorities. A third camp has been opened by the GOA to accommodate the influx of additional internally displaced persons. The GOA has provided 200 tons of aid (food, non-food items and tents) to the flood victims and has 185 tents available for deployment. Civil Protection has six airplanes able to carry 40 tons of cargo. The Civil Protection Warehouse in Cunene is under water; two large tents will be sent to serve as a warehouse and operational base. Additionally, 20,000 GOA-funded mosquito nets are being made available, along with 3,000 sheets of zinc roofing sheets for construction of 416 latrines in all camps. WHO has delivered five tons of medicine kits valued at \$27,325 for diarrhea treatment, chloride for water cleaning and other emergency materials. UNICEF is committing one water treatment unit capable of providing safe water for up to 5,000 people a day, in addition to the unit already available in Ondjiva. Additionally, UNICEF will provide four water bladders (2 x 5,000 L and 2 x 10,000L) along with 28,000 jerry cans for water storage, 100 bags (40 kg / bag) of HDH chlorine, 50 boxes of water purification tables and 50,000 bars of soap.

¶8. Preliminary assessments by UNICEF, Catholic Relief Services, and Oxfam indicate that access to clean water and food are the primary concerns. The displaced families have been accommodated in tents and some public schools with limited or no sanitation at all. Three of the four reported deaths are hunger related. The floods occurred at the peak of the hunger season, and the local population was already food-stressed from last year's floods. Local churches were being approached for food assistance before the flooding began. Both the floods and the food insecurity impede poor households' ability to work in their fields and secure their livelihoods.

¶9. Because of the magnitude of the flooding, the US Mission requests the assistance of a USAID/OFDA advisor to assess the situation and consider the need for disaster response and recovery interventions.

10. The US Mission will follow-up with USAID's Office of Food for Peace on the possibility of providing P.L. 480 resources to address food needs of the flood-affected population.

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